Claims

[c1] A method for distributing content in a packet-switched network comprising the steps of:

receiving from a client a request for content identified by a resource identifier;

querying a mapping service using the resource identifier of the content;

receiving a list of servers in the network that store the content identified by the resource identifier; and

redirecting the client to one of the servers using a second resource identifier.

[c2] The invention of claim 1 wherein the client is redirected using protocol-based redirection.

[c3] The invention of claim 1 wherein the client is redirected using a helper file.

[c4] The invention of claim 1 wherein the resource identifier is a URN and the second resource identifier is a URL.

[c5] A method for distributing content in a packet-switched network comprising the steps of:

storing in a database a list of servers in the network that store content identified by a resource identifier;

updating the database as content stored on the servers change;

responding to queries requesting content identified by a resource identifier with the list of servers that store the content, wherein the list of servers can be used to redirect clients to one of the servers.

[c6] The invention of claim 5 wherein the database has a centralized mapping server.

[c7] The invention of claim 6 wherein the database is updated in response to update messages received from the servers.

[c8] The invention of claim 5 wherein the database is distributed among servers in the network.

[c9] The invention of claim 8 wherein updates to the database are not broadcast to the servers and wherein queries are broadcast to the servers.